

LEANING IN AND LOOKING AHEAD PART IV

1Therefore when we could endure *it* no longer, we thought it best to be left behind at Athens alone, 2and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's fellow worker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you as to your faith, 3so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. 4For indeed when we were with you, we *kept* telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know. 5For this reason, when I could endure *it* no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the tempter might have tempted you, and our labor would be in vain. **I Thessalonians 3:1-5 NASB**

- Paul's dilemma: he couldn't bear not knowing the condition of the Thessalonian Church, but he couldn't go to them.
 - He sends Timothy to check in on them, to encourage, steady, and strengthen them in the faith.
 - Paul chose to be in Athens alone in order to be sure that the church in Thessalonica was doing well.

10The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so. 12Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men. 13But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there as well, agitating and stirring up the crowds. 14Then immediately the brethren sent Paul out to go as far as the sea; and Silas and Timothy remained there. 15Now those who escorted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they left. 16Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols. 17So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing *Gentiles*, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. **Acts 17:10-17 NASB**

1After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. 2And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, 3and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. 4And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. **Acts 18:1-4 NASB**

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- One of Paul's chief concerns was that the Thessalonians would get disturbed or deceived by the difficulties that he and they were facing (**1 Thessalonians 3:3**)
 - He points out that working through the difficulties was connected to their destiny... (dealing with difficulties is linked to destiny).
 - ..." that none of you might be un-nerved by your present trials."

Weymouth

15Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; 16the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; **Philippians 1:15-16 NASB**

9 I, John, your brother and companion (sharer and participator) with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patient endurance [which are] in Jesus *Christ*, was on the isle called Patmos, [banished] on account of [my witnessing to] the Word of God and the testimony (the proof, the evidence) for Jesus *Christ*. **Revelation 1:9 AMPC**

- Paul is also concerned about the enemy causing trouble for the church.
- We must learn to enforce the victory of Jesus.

13When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him. **Colossians 2:13-15 NASB**

8To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; 10so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly *places*. **Ephesians 3:8-10 NASB**

20Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, 21to Him *be* the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. **Ephesians 3:20-21 NASB**

- Paul is picturing a Roman triumphal procession where conquered and captured soldiers are stripped of their weapons and battle attire and paraded through the streets to demonstrate their complete defeat.

6But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you, 7for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; 8for now we *really* live, if you stand firm in the Lord. 9For what thanks can we render to God for you in return for all the joy with which we rejoice before our God on your account, 10as we night and day keep praying most earnestly that we may see your face, and may complete what is lacking in your faith? **I Thessalonians 3:6-10 NASB**

- Timothy returns to Paul with a great report from Thessalonica. (**I Thessalonians 3:6-7**)
 - Good news of their faith and love. (**v6**)
 - "...with a glowing account of your faith and love." **Phillips**
 - "...that you always think kindly of us."
 - "...that you are still holding me in affectionate remembrance."
Montgomery
 - "...and you want to see us as much as we want to see you." **Taylor**

- Paul's heart response to Timothy's report...Now I am Really Living!! (**I Thessalonians 3:8-10**)
 - "...for now I am *really living*, if you are standing firm in the Lord."
Montgomery
 - "...for it is new life to us to know that you are holding fast to the Lord."
Twentieth Century New Testament
 - Paul expresses his thankfulness to God for the joy this report brings to him. (**v9**)
 - "...for all the happiness you made me feel in the presence of God."
Goodspeed
 - "...how great the joy with which we are glad because of you before our God." **The New Testament in Basic English**
 - Paul prays for the Thessalonians in a consistent ongoing manner that he might get to see them and add to them. (**v10**)
 - "...night and day making abundant entreaties." **Rotherham**
 - "...to see you personally and to adjust." **Verkuyl**
 - See **Ephesians 4:11-13** (equip)
 - "...that we might fill up. **Alford**
 - "...and round things out to completeness." **Williams**
 - Paul wanted to complete anything lacking in their faith.

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- "...what needs advancement in your faith." **Verkuyl**
- Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians. (**v11-13**)
 - He asks the Lord to send him to see Thessalonica. (**v11**)
 - Look at what he says in **I Thessalonians 2:17-20**
 - Warfare, Glory, & Joy (**I Thessalonians 2:17-20**)
 - Paul got tremendous satisfaction from the growth and expansion of the Thessalonian Church.
 - He loved them and their lives were significant to him.
 - ..."and we, brother-having been orphaned from you for a season of an hour in face, not in heart – we were more eager with great desire to see your face. Because we wanted to come to you. I, Paul, both once and twice Satan hindered us. **I Thessalonians 2:17-18, Transline N.T.**
 - ..." For what is our hope or joy, or the crown of which we boast? It is not for yourselves in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? Yes, you are our glory and our joy." **I Thessalonian 2:19-20, Weymouth N.T.**
 - Paul really loved these people, but he was 'hindered' three times from visiting them again. (See **I Peter 5:5-10; Ephesians 6:11**)
 - He prays they will be **really loving**, towards each other and to everyone. He wanted their love to increase and abound. (**I Thessalonians 3:12**)
 - "...the Lord make you grow in love and overflow with it for one another and for everybody." **Beck**
 - "...may the Lord give you a rich and even richer love for one another and for all men." (See **John 13:34-35; I John 4:7-8**)
 - Paul prays for their hearts to be blameless, holy, and expectant. (**v13**)
 - "...so that your hearts would be strong and faultlessly pure." **Goodspeed**